

## Assessment of the Election Manifestos of Uzbekistan Political Parties Between 2019-2024

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### ABSTRACT

Election manifestos are important policy documents for political parties. These documents are published before the election periods and are an important observation document for the evaluation of the promises and policies of political parties in the post-election period. In line with these documents, voters can track whether the promises made are fulfilled or not. These declarations include certain issues. Generally, these issues consist of areas where policy will be produced continuously in democratic societies. Accordingly, the election declarations prepared by the political parties of Uzbekistan for the period between 2019-2024 were examined. The discourses of each political party on the economy, judiciary, health, education and foreign policy, which are common in their election manifesto, were examined. This study aims to determine the similarities and differences in the common issues determined in the election manifestos of the political parties of Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** Political Parties of Uzbekistan, Election Manifestos, Policies, Promises.

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### Özbekistan Siyasi Partilerinin Seçim Beyannamelerinin Değerlendirilmesi

#### ÖZ

Seçim beyannameleri siyasi partiler için önemli politika belgelerindedir. Bu belgeler seçim dönemlerinden önce yayınlanmakta, seçimlerden sonraki dönemde siyasi partilerin vaatlerinin ve politikalarının değerlendirilmesi için önemli bir gözlem belgesi niteliğindedir. Seçmenler bu belgeler doğrultusunda verilen vaatlerin gerçekleşip gerçekleşmediğini takip edebilmektedir. Bu beyannameler belirli konuları içermektedir. Genellikle bu konular demokratik toplumdaki sürekli politika üretecek alanlardan oluşmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda Özbekistan siyasi partilerinin 2019-2024 arası dönem için hazırladıkları seçim beyannameleri incelemeye tabi tutulmuştur. Her siyasi partinin seçim beyannamesinde ortaklaşan ekonomi, yargı, sağlık, eğitim ve dış politika konularındaki söylemleri incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Özbekistan siyasi partilerinin seçim beyannamelerindeki belirlenen ortak konulardaki benzerlik ve farklılıkların tespit edilmesidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Özbekistan Siyasi Partileri, Seçim Beyannameleri, Politikalar, Vaatler.

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### INTRODUCTION

Political parties are organizations established in democratic countries that aim to come to power, which is their most basic function. Elections held in countries are also an important

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organization for political parties. To come to power with this organization, political parties set the agenda and try to create public opinion.

Political parties can also be defined as organizations that have ideologies, have a party program, and work in line with this program (Yayla 2003: 221). Political parties act in accordance with their programs and by implementing their programs, they try to bring their members to power and want to take control of the government (Daver 1993: 223).

Political parties also publish election manifestos before election periods. These declarations are also part of the election campaigns and explain the policies of their parties to the public. Therefore, the promises of the parties can also be found in these declarations. Declarations are party-specific. Therefore, the declarations of different parties may differ from each other in terms of form and quantity. The only thing they have in common is that the parties or candidates appeal to the voters because of the possibility of coming to power (Arklan & Tanacı 2020: 2).

From a political point of view, election manifestos are also defined as strategy documents written by party elites in which goals are set (Laver & Garry 2000: 620). There are basic characteristics of election manifestos. Election manifestos are prepared to reach the general electorate. Therefore, they should be written in an understandable language. They present the ideologies, policy areas and priorities of the parties. In general, policy priorities are grouped under headings such as economy, education, health, environment, rule of law, culture, and foreign policy.

Election manifestos can also include targets and promises. As a matter of fact, these declarations are in the nature of a promise. Since the policies to be made within a period are determined, the election manifesto of the political party that comes to power becomes evidence for the voters. In the event that the policies and promises set are not implemented until the next election, election manifestos are important for voters to determine the credibility and consistency of that political party.

At another point, the election manifestos of political parties are also a mirror of the competition among themselves. Political parties, especially those that are close to each other in terms of voters, can develop arguments against each other thanks to these declarations and try to prove to the voters how effective their policies will be.

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An increase in accountability, political participation, and social consensus can also be observed through election manifestos. Today, with the level of digitalization, it has become easier to access, evaluate, disseminate and discuss election manifestos.

Election manifestos are very important for elections, political parties and voters. This study aims to determine the similarities and differences in the common issues determined in the election manifestos of the political parties of Uzbekistan.

### **Political Parties of Uzbekistan**

There are currently five political parties in Uzbekistan that participated in the elections and gained the right to be represented in the parliament. These include the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (O'zbekiston Liberal-Democratic Partiyasi-O'ZLIDEP), the “National Revival” Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (O'zbekiston “Milly Tiklanish” Democratic Party-MILLY TIKLANISH), the Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (O'zbekiston Sotsial-Demokrat Partiyasi-ADOLAT), the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (O'zbekiston Xalq Democratic Partiyasi-XDP) and the Ecology Party of Uzbekistan (O'zbekiston Ekologik Partiyasi-O'EP).

On October 4, 2003, a group of entrepreneurs and business people started an initiative to establish a national political organization. On October 7, 2003, the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov met with this group, and on November 15, 2003, this group organized the founding congress of the political party they were going to establish, and created the program, charter and related organs of the party. O'ZLIDEP was established by the Congress (URL-1). As the name of the party suggests, it is understood that it adopts a liberal democratic ideology.

MILLY TIKLANISH was founded on June 9, 1995 (URL-2). The ideology of the party is conservatism. However, it is also known that it adopts a liberal attitude in terms of economic policies (Qarshiyev 2024). ADOLAT was founded on February 18, 1995 (URL-3). The ideological aspect of the party is social democracy. This is based on principles such as justice, the rule of law, and social equality (Qarshiyev 2024).

XDP was founded on November 1, 1991. At the congress held on the same day, the priority areas of the party's program, statutes and political activities were determined (URL-4). The ideological aspect of the XDP is social democracy, like ADOLAT. Social justice and equality, social solidarity, and social democracy appear as the primary aspects of the party's ideology (Qarshiyev 2024).

O'EP, which is a younger party compared to other parties, started its establishment phase with the congress held on 1-17 December 2018, and the program and charter of the party were adopted with the congress held in Tashkent on 8 January 2019 and the organs of the party organization were formed (URL-5). The ideological stance of the party is environmentalism. The party aims at ensuring ecological stability and the development of democracy (Qarshiyev 2024).

As a result of the elections held between 22 December 2019 and 5 January 2020, OZLIDEP won 53 deputies, MILLY TIKLANISH won 36 deputies, ADOLAT won 24 deputies, XDP won 22 deputies, and O'EP won 15 deputies in the 150-seat Parliament of Uzbekistan. The next election is expected to be held on December 31, 2024 (URL-6). As we head towards the 2024 elections, it is important to examine the election manifestos of these five political parties and determine their policy priorities.

### **Analysis of Election Declarations of Political Parties of Uzbekistan: Similarities and Differences**

The main headings of the election manifestos of the five political parties operating in Uzbekistan are given in Table 1. Considering the election manifestos of these parties, it can be seen that they determine the policy areas according to their ideological attitudes, so while they determine policies on the same topics on certain issues, some parties also determine policies on different issues. In general, the issues that the political parties of Uzbekistan agreed on in their election manifestos were economy, judiciary, education, health and foreign policy.

**Table: 1.** Headlines of Election Declarations of Political Parties of Uzbekistan

<b>O'ZLIDEP</b>	<b>MILLY TIKLANISH</b>	<b>ADOLAT</b>	<b>XDP</b>	<b>O'EP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Uzbekistan/New administration</li> <li>- Constitutional state</li> <li>- Free and competitive economy</li> <li>- Social area development</li> <li>- Safe, peaceful and stable country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Democratization, civil society</li> <li>- Rule of law</li> <li>- Sustainable economy</li> <li>- Structure of society</li> <li>- Foreign policy</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Culture and Tourism</li> <li>- National information area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legal and social state building</li> <li>- Strong social policy</li> <li>- A just society</li> <li>- Smart economy</li> <li>- Patriotic youth</li> <li>- Foreign policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic development</li> <li>- Improving the living standards of citizens</li> <li>- Improving the prices of daily consumer goods and services</li> <li>- Housing and community services</li> <li>- Medical services</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Cultural and humanitarian life</li> <li>- Social economy</li> <li>- Employment policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economy</li> <li>- Environment safety</li> <li>- Protection of the environment</li> <li>- Climate change</li> <li>- State, public administration, judiciary</li> <li>- Development of the fields of health, education, science and culture</li> <li>- Foreign policy and international cooperation</li> </ul>

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			- Social equality and democracy in the fields of state, society, jurisdiction - Social stability	
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O'ZLIDEP, which has the highest percentage of votes in Uzbekistan on the economy, has determined that it will follow a free and competitive policy. It has been stated that the obstacles to entrepreneurship will be removed, small and medium-sized enterprises will be supported, industrialization and competition with new technologies will be ensured, and an intensive development will be achieved by completing modernization in the field of agriculture (URL-7). MILLY TIKLANISH, on the other hand, promised to increase the competitiveness of local producers, to develop industry and high technology, and to support national producers to promote exports in order to ensure the sustainable development of the national economy (URL-8). ADOLAT used the term smart economy in terms of economy. It has been stated that their aim is a national economy based on digital technologies. It was stated that they are supporters of the development of industry and enterprises, the implementation of fair tax and budget policies, and a "living and productive" agriculture in the field of agriculture (URL-9). XDP states that the country's growing economic potential should be used to strengthen the standard and quality of living of the poor. It is emphasized that products with high added value should be produced, and regional programs should be developed in the production of necessary goods. Therefore, it is stated that the party is a supporter of the social economy (URL-10). O'EP, on the other hand, stated that it is in favor of green economy in line with the ideology of its party, and that renewable and alternative energies should be developed, so that ecological development will also take place (URL-11).

Regarding the judiciary, OZLIDEP states that Uzbekistan has the rule of law, that it is a country where the principle of justice operates, therefore trust in the fair judiciary should be strengthened, and corruption should be opposed (URL-7). MILLY TIKLANISH stressed the need to ensure the rule of law, improve the activities of courts and law enforcement agencies, increase public legal and political awareness, and fight corruption (URL-8). ADOLAT emphasizes that they have made the understanding of justice everywhere and for everyone the main principle, that transparency should be prioritized in the transactions carried out in terms of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies, that everyone should be considered equal before the law, and that corruption should be fought (URL-9). Regarding the judiciary, the XDP stated that a social democratic system should be established in the country. It is

emphasized that equality in the judiciary can be achieved through social democracy (URL-10). O'EP again makes a reference to ecology in the judiciary and stated that the principle of “polluter pays” will be adopted at the point of pollution of soil, water and atmosphere by real and legal persons (URL-11).

On the subject of education, OZLIDEP stated that Uzbekistan is a country where human development and talent are valued, therefore, it will work to raise free, strong and self-confident youth for harmonious development, and in this way, the future will be built (URL-7). MILLY TIKLANISH emphasized that under the reform of the science and education system, the participation rate of the country's population in higher education should be increased by 50%, the national culture and spirituality should be developed, and the youth should be protected from the negative effects of mass culture (URL-8). ADOLAT emphasized that investment in education is an investment in the future, as well as an element that ensures the welfare and competitiveness of the people, for this reason, the education system will be regularly improved, and they are supporters of quality education and the training of highly qualified personnel (URL-9). XDP emphasizes social equity in education. It is said that a democratic society can be created if social equality is achieved in education (URL-10). O'EP has developed the slogan “nature will be protected by devotees!” in terms of education. Although it is understood that ecology will be prioritized in the education system, it is also seen that an education program has not been clearly put forward (URL-11).

On health, OZLIDEP emphasized that efforts will be made for Uzbekistan to have an advanced health system and that it should be among the 30 leading countries in the world in this field, efforts will be made to reduce maternal and child mortality rates, and efforts will be made to provide affordable, quality and professional medicines (URL-7). MILLY TIKLANISH has prioritized taking medical measures for a sustainable lifestyle, increasing health education and increasing reproductive rate (URL-8). ADOLAT emphasized that the health of the population is a great wealth and will be a guarantee of the sustainable development of society, therefore, it is necessary to provide guaranteed medical services to citizens, to encourage the work of medical personnel, to disseminate modern technology and treatment methods, and to support the continuation of the reform carried out in this field (URL-9). It has been noted that the provision of medical services, especially the treatment of at-risk patients, is an important aspect of social policy for XDP (URL-10). O'EP stated that it is necessary to fundamentally improve the provision of medical services to the population and

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emphasized the importance of ecology for its parties in this regard with the slogan "healthy environment-human health" (URL-11).

On foreign policy, OZLIDEP declared that it would adopt an effective, mutually beneficial, constructive and pragmatic foreign policy approach, and that it would cooperate with leading foreign political parties in order to improve the legal framework for foreign policy (URL-7). MILLY TIKLANISH has views on the development of an active foreign policy, the need to work on the protection of the interests of citizens abroad, the need to ensure international harmony, and the development of international economic policies for national development (URL-8). ADOLAT emphasized that they have adopted a peaceful and progressive foreign policy approach, that Uzbekistan should develop friendly relations with all countries and international institutions, that they are in favor of strengthening the country's place and role in relations, that they are against Uzbekistan's participation in various military blocs, and that they support mutually beneficial cooperation and projects with international and regional organizations (URL-9). There was no mention of foreign policy in the XDP's election manifesto (URL-10). O'EP believes in the establishment of security, stability and friendly neighborly relations around Uzbekistan, and stated that relations with the United Nations will be actively maintained and that they will fight against problems and threats that will shake international peace and security (URL-11).

As can be seen, it can be seen that the parties generally emphasize similar issues in the above-mentioned policy areas, and the points where they differ only stem from the ideological foundations of the political parties. From the point of view of differences, it can be seen that O'EP is the most different party in terms of views. Since O'EP has taken ecology as an ideological basis, ecology has been emphasized in every subject. It has already called on its citizens to actively participate in the protection of human health, the environment and natural resources (URL-11).

### **CONCLUSION**

It is known that political parties make intense promises during election periods and produce policies in this direction. Therefore, election manifestos are target documents for political parties. At the same time, the fact that these declarations are well prepared is important for political parties in terms of the votes that may actually come.

One of the purposes of election manifestos is to introduce the party to voters. Therefore, election manifestos are important in persuading the society. Political parties also pay serious attention to these declarations while preparing them.

Accordingly, the election declarations prepared by the political parties of Uzbekistan for the period between 2019-2024 were examined. In this review, it was determined that there are common policy areas in five areas. These areas are economy, judiciary, education, health and foreign policy.

It has been observed that the concept of sustainable economic development comes to the fore in the field of economics on the issues that the political parties examined have in common. While the issue of the rule of law comes to the fore in the judiciary, the fact that the issue of combating corruption has been raised in many parties shows us an interesting situation. This is the desire to turn the reflection of the current conditions into politics through election manifestos.

While the development of health services in the field of health is prioritized, it is seen that the importance of active foreign policy and cooperation comes to the fore in foreign policy. There is no clear area of common ground in education. However, almost every political party has said the importance of youth education.

The differences are due to ideological differences. In general, while there is a parallel in the discourses of O'ZLIDEP and MILLY TIKLANISH, parallelism was also observed in the discourses of ADOLAT and XDP. However, since the ideology of O'EP is environmentalism, it is quite clear that the biggest differences in terms of rhetoric are in this party.

This study can of course be developed in the future. For example, how these declarations were received by the public, their impact on election results, and how well the party that will come to power after the 2024 elections fulfills its promises until the next elections can be examined.



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